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LETTER DATED 24 JANUARY 2000 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Pursuant to Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) of 10 June 1999, I have the honour to convey the attached report on the international security presence in Kosovo covering the period from 24 November to 14 December 1999 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would bring the report to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Kofi A. ANNAN

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Annex

Monthly report to the United Nations on Kosovo Force (KFOR) operations

1. Over the reporting period (24 November-14 December 1999), there were approximately 44,000 Kosovo Force (KFOR) troops deployed in the theatre. There have been no changes in national deployments since the last report.

2. The deployment of Russian troops into the area around Orahovac in Multinational Brigade (MNB) (South) continues to be hampered, despite the removal of the last roadblock around the town on 24 November. Efforts towards a complete resolution of the deployment problem are under way.

Security

3. Although the overall level of violence during the reporting period was low, there was an upswing in the last week of November, particularly in the number of murders committed. For the most part, these murders appear to have been ethnically motivated, such as the murder of a Serbian professor in Pristina during Kosovo flag-day celebrations on 29 November. Acts of harassment and intimidation also continued, with incidents of ethnically motivated violence that demonstrated a high degree of professionalism and preparation, such as the mortar attacks against Kosovar Serb villages near Gnjilane in MNB (East) in November. Arson attacks on property also continued throughout the period, especially on houses belonging to Serbs, and the security situation for all the ethnic minorities in Kosovo remains precarious.

4. KFOR consequently continues to attach the highest priority to the protection of the ethnic minorities, and approximately 50 per cent of its personnel is assigned to this task. Troops continue to provide a permanent presence in Serb towns, villages and neighbourhoods and even in individual houses, and to organize patrols and checkpoints in key areas to provide security and instil a feeling of confidence in the community. Simultaneously, KFOR is following an overall strategy that aims at reducing the amount of ethnically motivated violence in Kosovo. This includes the establishment of joint security working groups, escorts for individuals and groups when necessary, escorts for humanitarian aid convoys, high-profile patrols and static checkpoints in and around ethnic minority pockets, as noted above, and operations to find and confiscate illegal/unauthorized weapons and munitions throughout Kosovo. KFOR troops are also working to combat organized crime in the province.

5. Since June 1999, the number of murders and other violent acts in the province has decreased gradually and significantly, despite occasional setbacks. KFOR's presence has resulted in a reduction in the number of reported major offences, from over 300 in the last week of June to less than 50 in the last week of November.

6. On 24 November, snipers fired at KFOR troops as they were guarding an orthodox church in Zvecan in MNB (West). Patrols were sent to reinforce the troops at the church, and a search for the snipers was conducted. Unfortunately, they escaped. There were no injuries. Similarly, on

26 November, shots were fired at KFOR troops in MNB (North) and in MNB (East). Again, troops conducted patrols to locate the snipers, but they escaped. There were no injuries.

7. KFOR continues to work closely with the United Nations Mine Action Coordination Centre (UNMACC) and other demining organizations in Kosovo in order to foster mine awareness training and to educate both soldiers and civilians of the danger of mines and unexploded ordnance. Increased efforts in this area have resulted in a decreasing number of mine incidents. KFOR's focus remains on eradicating the threat posed by cluster bomb units (CBUs), on clearing border-crossing sites and on conducting expedient clearance of those areas that impact on immediate operations or freedom of movement. The Serb Army (VJ) has provided 607 records of minefields to KFOR. To date, KFOR has cleared mines from 590 schools in Kosovo. By 18 November 1999, 6,130 anti-personnel mines, 3,481 anti-tank mines and 7,408 bomblets had been cleared.

8. Residual caches of weapons continue to be discovered and confiscated throughout the area of operations. At the beginning of December, KFOR troops uncovered weapons and large quantities of explosives, mines and ammunition during a search of former Kosovo Liberation Army (UCK) assembly areas being used by the provisional Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC). KFOR's weapons destruction policy, which began on 15 October, has resulted to date in the destruction of 2,053 weapons, 57 mines and explosive devices and 836 items of ammunition.

Cooperation and compliance by the parties

9. The provisional KPC is still not in existence as an organization, although the selection process is expected to be completed by late January. In December, 42 nominations were received for the 44 key leader positions; of these nominees, 4 were disqualified and 9 selected on a probationary basis. To date, there have been only 95 applicants from ethnic minority groups. Over the reporting period, the provisional KPC as a whole was deemed to be in compliance with the 12 November instructions of the KFOR Commander (COMKFOR), although individuals have been non-compliant with respect to the spirit of those instructions, and there have been examples of involvement in the intimidation of ethnic minorities and in smuggling and organized crime. The provisional Commander, Mr. Ceku, has repeatedly given his assurance to COMKFOR that the organization will work within the instructions.

10. The VJ and Serb security forces continue to comply with the terms of the Military Technical Agreement (MTA) and in general remain cooperative in their dealings with KFOR.

Cooperation with international organizations

11. KFOR continues to provide humanitarian assistance throughout Kosovo on a daily basis, with particular focus on the transport of fuel and firewood throughout the province, especially to inaccessible areas and to minorities. KFOR troops also continue to support food distribution and the escort of refugees and internally displaced persons.

12. At 14 December 1999, the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) police force numbered 1,900 persons. Responsibility for public security operations has been transferred from KFOR to UNMIK police in Pristina, Prizren, Mitrovica and Uroševac, although KFOR still provides troops for joint patrols. KFOR also provides daily support to the Kosovo Police School (KPS), whose first graduates have been deployed all over Kosovo for on-the-job training with UNMIK police.

13. Control and monitoring of borders remain a high priority for KFOR, with KFOR troops providing 24-hour control and monitoring of the authorized border-crossing points with Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.[a] KFOR also provides security for the transportation to Pristina of the customs duties collected at the border. During the reporting period, KFOR troops prevented a number of illegal crossings on the border between Albania and Kosovo.

14. KFOR continues to support UNMIK at all levels of the civil administration. On 15 December, a "Kosovo-UNMIK Joint Interim Administrative Structure" was established aimed at ensuring the participation in Kosovo's administrative structure of all parties in the province. To date, however, no minority representatives have participated. Over the reporting period, KFOR provided escorts for UNMIK officials to various proposed civil registration sites throughout the province. The sites will be used by UNMIK to register and provide identification documents to all citizens.

15. KFOR is currently operating and maintaining the rail network in the province, although progress is being made in establishing a civilian-run rail system. Over the reporting period, Pristina airport remained closed to commercial traffic.

Return of refugees and displaced persons

16. In December, more than 6,300 refugee returns were organized, mainly from countries outside the Balkans.

Outlook

17. There has been no significant change in the security situation in Kosovo since the last report. Ethnically motivated violence remains a major cause for concern, with continued tension in areas such as Mitrovica, Gnjilane and Orahovac. KFOR will continue to work in close coordination with UNMIK to address these issues in order to promote and maintain peace and stability in the province.

Notes

[a] Turkey recognizes the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name.